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March 10, 2006

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Re: Subcommittee Hearing, "Human Cloning and Embryonic Stem Cell Research after
Seoul: Examining exploitation, fraud and ethical problems in the research"

Dear Dr. Mathews:

Thank you very much for your testimony on March 7, 2006 before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources. Due to the limited amount of time available for the hearing, however, we were unable to address all of the issues involved. To better help the Subcommittee understand these significant issues, we are submitting to you the attached list of questions for the record.

In order to help the Subcommittee move forward with its work on this subject, we request that you respond to these questions in writing no later than the close of business on Friday, April 7, 2006. Your answers will be included in the written record.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance. If you have any questions, you may have a member of your staff contact Malia Holst at 202-225-2577.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Souder

Chairman

Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,
Drug Policy and Human Resources

1. In your written testimony, you say the Hwang fraud “was quickly recognized by members of the scientific community.” However, initial questions about egg donation raised by *Nature* were quickly put to rest by Hwang, and it was ultimately a Korean investigative television program, led by some Korean blogging, that finally brought the fraud to light, almost two years after the publication of Hwang’s first cloning paper. After doing so, the Korean television program that exposed Hwang was itself severely criticized for its work.

- *Would you say the current peer review process is thorough enough in its treatment of alluring scientific papers such as Hwang’s?*

2. You are listed as one of the signers of the recently announced consensus document formed by an international consortium on stem cells, ethics, and law, known as the “Hinxton Group.” This document is posted on the Johns Hopkins Bioethics website, and it notes that it is “funded by” six groups, one of which is the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which strongly supports research cloning and embryonic stem cell research. It seems as though JDRF’s support means it is a foregone conclusion that the “consensus document” would fall squarely on the side of a pro-cloning and embryonic stem cell consensus.

- *Among the dozens of signers on this document, are you aware of any of them having a public record that is critical of embryonic stem cell research or cloning?*

3. Do you currently serve, or have you served, on the Institutional Review Board at Johns Hopkins University for reviewing human subjects research?

- *Do you think such boards do an effective job of protecting human subjects in research?*

4. In 2004, the Genetics and Public Policy Institute polled almost 5000 Americans and discovered that over 72% of democrats either disapprove or strongly disapprove of “scientists working on ways to create a cloned human embryo for research.” When asked “Do you think embryo cloning for research should be allowed at all?” over 76% of democrats said no. Moreover, Canada, France, and Australia have criminalized research cloning; the UN has recommended a universal ban on human cloning, and the European Parliament voted to affirm that decision.

- *In light of this information, do you think it is justified to call the Hinxton document, endorsed by all appearances solely by supporters of research cloning, a true “consensus?”*